

Papitto Opportunity Connection

January 2025

Jenks Park Pediatrics Continues To Provide Care For The Uninsured

On any given weekday, Jenks Park Pediatrics (JPP), is bustling with life. Immigrant families seeking refuge arrive to the Central Falls practice usually by word-of-mouth.

“With POC support we continue to provide free care to children and women without insurance: primary care for the kids and breast and cervical cancer screening for women,” said Dr. Beata Nelken, Jenks Park founder. “This includes visits for 541 new children and young adults in pediatrics in the last year and 683 visits for cancer screening and prevention. Lives have been saved, cancers treated, and everyone is much healthier all-around.”



Image courtesy of Jenks Park Pediatrics

Dr. Nelken says the influx of new patients further underscores the need for comprehensive pediatric services and additional screening measures that focus on nutrition, mental health and specialized support groups for autistic children. Nelken credits JPP’s success in addressing these critical concerns to families having access to a trilingual nutritionist and bilingual social worker.

“It’s unusual for a small office to offer these services, but because of POC’s partnership, we have been able to provide exceptional care in every realm of health. Our hope is to form resource support groups for these parents, continue to connect them to community assistance, each other, specialized education support, and day-to-day assistance at home,” she said.

As JPP enters its fifth year of operation, looking ahead requires them to remain grounded in their foundational principles. At JPP, that commitment translates into unwavering support for patients and families navigating the complexities of immigration and ensuring all children grow up physically and developmentally healthy.

Kick Off For The 2025 Transform Rhode Island Scholarship Program

Transform Rhode Island Scholarship recipients, including 2024 winner Sebastian Connolly, recently joined POC founder Barbara Papitto and others for a fun afternoon of bowling and brainstorming to kick off the 2025 Transform Rhode Island Scholarship.



Pictured above standing, left to right: TRIS Leader Chachi Carvalho, TRIS scholarship recipients Adrian Bautista (The Met), Caroline Kanaczet (St. Mary Academy - Bay View), Zach Pinto (Emerson U/Shea), Kaitlyn Santilli (La Salle), Zach Jean-Pierre (Cranston West), Jalisa Ramos (CCRI, The Met), Daisha Jackson (The Met, SNHU online) and POC Founder Barbara Papitto. Front kneeling: TRIS scholarship recipients Reyana Data (Moses Brown), Nico Upegui (Yale/North Providence) and 2024 TRIS winner Sebastian Connolly (Harvard/Classical). Also pictured, Gregg Perry, Siobhan Carroll and Deb Weinreich from The Perry Group.

Sebastian, a Classical High School grad and freshman at Harvard, is preparing to implement his winning TRIS idea—a peer-to-peer tutoring program which is supported by POC's \$1 million investment.

Who will be next?

For the fourth straight year, POC is listening and investing in young people in Rhode Island. In 2024 we received 465 applications from RI high school students representing 67 public, private, parochial, and charter schools across the state—from Woonsocket to Westerly. Help us reach our goal this year of 1,000 applicants!

To apply, RI high school students must simply answer one question:

If you had \$1 million to improve the lives of those who need it most in RI, how would you do it?

POC has once again committed to investing \$1 million in making the winning idea a reality and the winner will receive a \$25,000 scholarship. Nine other TRIS finalists will receive scholarships worth between \$5,000 and \$15,000 each.

Applications will be accepted from Feb. 3 through March 31, 2025. For more info or to apply, visit [here](#).

Social Enterprise Greenhouse Making A Difference

According to Vera Ramos, the proprietor of Beirão Café Restaurant, working with Social Enterprise Greenhouse (SEG) transformed her business. SEG's mission is to accelerate impact by providing inclusive support and networks for entrepreneurs and businesses committed to positive societal and economic change. For Vera, the program provided problem solving tools, improved staff training, and enhanced customer service.

"I gained valuable skills like leveraging social media, offering tailored promotions, and expanding my menu," she said.



Pictured above: Vera Ramos

SEG provides networks, knowledge, and resources to help people launch and grow impactful businesses and organizations by offering a wide range of services. Committed to creating and growing inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems that foster just, equitable, and resilient communities, SEG received a grant from POC in 2023 with the goal of reducing barriers to capital for underserved entrepreneurs, especially those of color, through creation of an impact and equity fund.

After piloting the Pawtucket Central Falls Impact Fund program and receiving an overwhelming response— 56 applications for just 10 spots—it became clear how significant the demand for accessible funding is within the community.



The pilot underscored the critical need for initiatives that address the gaps in capital access for underserved businesses. According to SEG, the investments made through the pilot created a substantial impact, demonstrating how targeted funding can transform businesses and drive economic growth. Says SEG CEO, Julie Owens “This success highlights the need for larger-scale investments to create truly sustainable and resilient local economies.”

Building on this insight, SEG is working toward greater capital accessibility through two key projects: the creation of an impact fund designed to support larger investments and a comprehensive capital navigation system. The navigation system will help businesses identify the right capital opportunities and equip them with the tools and guidance needed to successfully secure funding. Together, these initiatives aim to amplify economic impact, foster equity, and empower businesses to thrive.

As for Ms. Ramos, her business is thriving. “Since completing the program, my business has grown significantly—we’ve attracted more customers, expanded our menu, and increased revenue. With the microgrant, we’ll invest in a new cash register system, boosting efficiency and customer satisfaction, paving the way for sustained success.”

POC Grantmaking: An Update

The POC Board of Trustees, with advice from our Advisory Board, are currently reviewing the more than two dozen Million Dollar Innovation Grant applications and more than 100 small grant applications we received in December 2024.

We are encouraged by the many thoughtful programs put forward by Rhode Island’s non-profit community. We anticipate having funding decisions made by the end of the first quarter of 2025, if not sooner.

For 2025, POC will continue to make available approximately \$6 million for unsolicited funding, with \$5 million being dedicated to the Million Dollar Innovation Grant program.

Applications for both grants, which will be awarded twice a year through a competitive RFP process, will be accepted June 1-15 and December 1-15 via our online [application portal](#). All organizations applying for a grant must submit an online application to be considered—this applies to first time grants, and those organizations seeking additional funding.

Importantly, there is NO other mechanism for requesting a grant even if your organization has received prior funding from POC. Members of the Board of Trustees and Board of Advisors will NOT accept grant requests personally and any such request will NOT be considered.

You do not have to know someone to have your grant request considered.

TEDx Providence

At this year's TEDx Providence on Saturday, February 8, POC Managing Trustee John Tarantino will be recognized for his 2024 TEDx Providence talk titled *Redemption Stories* which went on to become the #1 TEDx talk globally in 2024, amassing 23 million views within the first year.

This year, John will take the stage at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium once again to deliver another incredible talk.

For more information or to purchase tickets, click [here](#).



Pictured above: POC Managing Trustee, John Tarantino. Images courtesy of TEDx Providence.

We hope your organization, friends, and family members will join us on Saturday, February 8 and connect with our Rhode Island community while enjoying an afternoon of learning and celebration together.

[WEBSITE](#)

[MISSION](#)

[SIGN UP](#)

[CONTACT](#)

Papitto Opportunity Connection

100 Westminster Street Suite 105 | Providence, RI
02903 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) |
[Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

